AN

ESSAY

ON THE

IMPORTANCE

OF

SCHOOLS

OF

INDUSTRY AND RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION,

IN WHICH

THE NECESSITY

OF

PROMOTING THE GOOD EDUCATION

OF

POOR CHILDREN

IS PARTICULARLY CONSIDERED.

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PREFACE.

THE Author of the following pages, having urged the institution of Schools of Industry in various conversations with many respectable neighbours, and with general tokens of approbation, was induced to think, he should be performing an acceptable service to them, as well as some other persons in a private situation of life, by sketching out a plan of such a school, as he wished to recommend, and which could be easily reduced to practice, and at a small expence, in any village, or parish, where a sufficient number of scholars could be procured. At the same time, he conceived, it might not be improper, in a cheap form, to state his reasons for wishing to have such institutions rendered universal. He professes to have brought forward nothing

new; but thought, perhaps, that the communication of his sentiments might have some influence within a narrow circle of his friends and neighbours, whom accounts of other like establishments might never reach. It is an effort of beneficence, of no contemptible value, it is presumed, within the power of those, who cannot aspire to the superior praise of invention, to assist in the circulation of any interesting kind of knowledge, or the promotion of approved institutions within each particular district or province. The author might possibly have been able to have made some improvements on the plan he has sketched out, had he deferred the publication of it till he had collected more extensive information, than he at present possesses, of the plans, and success, of similar institutions. But whatever good the following Essay was calculated to produce, it was his wish, that it should have its effect, as soon as possible, at a period, that seemed to render the institution of Schools of Industry peculiarly necessary;

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at least, before the year was too far advanced; as, indisputably, the most proper time, at present, for establishing any such school, would be in the concluding part of the summer, when harvest is over, and girls cease to have any employment abroad, and a season of the year is approaching, when, probably, every accession to the earnings of a poor family will be very desirable. And if the School is opened at an early period, before the winter closes in, the children will already have made a sufficient progress to contribute something comfortable, by their earnings, towards the maintenance of the family during the severity of the winter.

MANY benevolent persons, the author is persuaded, will be inclined to object to what is proposed in the following pages,---that a portion of the weekly earnings of each scholar should be applied towards the payment of the expences of the school. Far be it from his wish, or intention, to dissuade any parish, or any number of respectable individuals, from taking the whole charge upon themselves, if they

they are so disposed. This only is his opinion, that, if it is expected, that the whole expence should be commonly defrayed by a subscription, or parochial contribution, we must never hope, that these institutions will become general.

Let it, then, be considered, that is is no usual thing, at present, for children to make any earnings, while they are yet at school. It is also maintained, that a small annual contribution, judiciously distributed in gratuities, would have a much more desirable effect on the minds of the scholars, than a trifling addition to their weekly gains. The gratuities coming in a larger mass would be received with more satisfaction; and perhaps by exciting them to greater exertions of industry, may more than compensate for what is required to be deducted from their earnings. There is also something admirable in this sentiment, which ought indeed to be studiously inculcated, that the scholars are not treated as parish poor, but that they have the satisfaction

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of remunerating their mistress, by their own industry, for her attention to them, and the assistance she gives them. The gratuities will not be regarded as parish relief, but as voluntary tokens of approbation from their respectable neighbours.

BOXTED, *August* 14, 1800

An Essay, &c.

THE increasing wretchedness of the lower orders of the community, both as to their character and circumstances, could hardly fail of attracting a large share of the attention of a benevolent public; and the thoughts of many truly valuable members of society have been assiduously occupied in devising the most efficacious means of improving the manners, and adding to the comforts, of their more necessitous brethren. A variety of useful hints and proposals have been suggested, and some partially carried into effect. Nothing, however, has yet been accomplished, that is fully adequate to meet the several evils, which are too justly lamented. Some improvements are, certainly, desirable in the administration of the poor's laws; particularly, that the relief, which is extended to the indigent, should be made to operate, in some measure, as a re-

ward and encouragement of good conduct.* But it is not by any reformation in one department only, that a perfect melioration can be expected in the condition of the inferior classes. But, perhaps, there is no single instance of beneficence, which is equally practicable, that would be found to produce so happy an effect on the manners of the poor, or to lay so good a foundation for farther improvements, as the general establishment of Schools of Industry and religious Education, judiciously regulated for the purpose of training up the children of the poor in the knowledge and practice of every

* For the purpose suggested in the text, it will be found expedient to transfer the administration of the poor's laws to a higher order of men, than those who are commonly entrusted with it at present; the most equitable way of doing which is, by imposing the rate on the landlord, in lieu of the tenant. The effect of the law may be mitigated in some cases, as it will, probably, be evaded in others. Still, it will be rendered the right, as well as the duty, of the landlord, to administer the tax, which by law is imposed on himself. The landlord, too, has a permanent interest in the parish, which the tenant has not. The incorporation of districts of a few parishes, for the relief of their common poor, seems also an advisable measure. In many parishes there is not a single active and intelligent man, that will concern himself much with the poor; or one only would, probably, find his sentiments generally opposed. In the incorporated district there can hardly fail of being some such, who would readily support each other. At least, the management of the poor would be rendered more public, and the persons concerned with it would feel their characters more implicated. The incorporated districts of Norfolk and Suffolk are probably too large.

every thing, which it is of most importance, that they should learn; and subjected to the inspection and superintendance of the clergy, or other respectable gentlemen, in the neighbourhood of each school. To undertake a regular defence of schools of industry might appear a reflection on the good sense of the community; and it is with pleasure remarked, that many such schools have been established of late years, and attended with a degree of success most highly gratifying to the feelings of humanity. There are, however, some considerations, that indicate the expediency of the proposed schools, which may not occur on a transient view of the subject, which yet will merit attention, whenever such institutions are attempted. It may not be improper, therefore, in a popular Essay, as this is designed to be, to take some notice of a few of the most important arguments, that may be urged in their behalf. And, in so doing, I shall have an opportunity of accomplishing a promise, I once made to the public, of considering the great importance of a good education to poor girls,* for whose benefit the institutions here recommended, are chiefly designed.

FORMERLY, each family, particularly in the lower walks of life, was accustomed to produce, or make, every

* SEE a Sermon, preached at *Colchester*, on the first of *August*, 1797, for the Benefit of the Sunday Schools in that Town, p. 18.

every commodity, that was deemed necessary for its comfortable subsistence. While the men were engaged in cultivating the earth, and other occupations abroad, the females employed their leisure time, in the intervals of their ordinary domestic avocations, in the manufacture of woollen and linen for the use of the family, each operation being commonly performed at home, from the first production of the rude material, till the commodity was fit for use. The progress, however, of the division of labour, and the prosperity of our commerce, have effected a very considerable alteration in the arrangement of the business of common life. Poor women and children, in lieu of manufacturing their own clothing, have, for the most part, been employed in the performance only of a single operation. They have been persuaded, that, in this way, they could earn more than enough to purchase the goods they were accustomed to manufacture for their own use. But the chief motive has, probably, been, that they would receive their earnings, by little and little, with full power of expending them as they pleased. Unhappily, by this change, a fatal blow has been levied at domestic economy, and every virtue, that follows in train. Their earnings have been blended with their ordinary expenditures. They have consumed, perhaps, a little more tea, sugar, and butter, and, at the end of a certain period, instead of possessing a fresh assortment

of

of comfortable clothing, they have been as poor as at first, and nearly in rags; to which, indeed, they become tolerably reconciled, unless they can obtain the assistance of some charitable person, or, by importunity, extort a supply from a parish officer.

VARIOUS improvements, however, in machinery for facilitating labour, have, at length, been the means of either entirely depriving a number of poor females of their ordinary employments, or of reducing their earnings to perfect insignificance. Or, perhaps, the manufactory, by which they have been employed, has fallen into decay, or is removed to some distant town. Unfortunately, the poor have long lost all recollection of the various branches of the manufactures, that were formerly carried on at home for their own use, excepting only the single operation, to which they have been recently confined. For the most part, they have no opportunity of learning them. They are no longer possessed of the necessary implements, or the ability to purchase them; and are equally incapable, without some assistance, of acquiring a knowledge of any new species of industry.

BUT more than this:---when the poor were accustomed to attend to a much greater variety of occupations, besides possessing a larger stock of ideas, their minds were much more exercised. There was more scope for a degree of ingenuity, and contrivance, in ar-

ranging their work to the best advantage. The circumstance of looking forward to a distant period for the enjoyment of the fruits of their industry, produced habitual forethought. Now that poor females have, from their earliest infancy, been trained up only to the performance of a single operation, in which manual dexterity, rather than any mental exertion, is required; their minds seem destitute of a proper degree of tone and vigour; and, when at length they are deprived of this their only employment, they appear neither to have activity, nor resolution sufficient to attempt any other; and quietly acquiesce in the expectation, that they shall be relieved by the operation of the poor's laws, whenever they are reduced to absolute distress. The same helplessness and torpidity of mind are discovered in every department of the economy of the house; and the usual domestic arrangements contribute, in no inconsiderable degree, to aggravate the effect. In many districts, it is commonly understood, that the man should supply his family with flour, while the women and girls by their industry are expected to find the smaller articles, that are wanted in the family, but chiefly such as are desired for their own use. To attempt, therefore, by any economical preparation, to reduce the expence, or quantity, of food consumed in the house, is regarded as a sacrifice of their own time and comfort, for the sole benefit of the man, who will only have so much

the more, that he can squander at an ale-hose. Hence economical cookery, as adapted to poor families, has long been forgotten in many parts of the kingdom; nor have poor women much desire to be instructed in it, or inclination to practice it. And if, indeed, the husband is induced to spend too large a portion of his time and wages at an ale-souse, the total absence of neatness and comfort at home must be often admitted as some apology for his misconduct. Under these circumstances can we be surprized, that a man should prefer expending his whole earnings upon himself, before sharing them with a family, that can contribute but little to their common support: that matrimony should be avoided as an odious restraint, and a family dreaded as an oppressive incumbrance: and as it is much to be feared, is too frequently the unhappy result, that prostitution should be regarded as a necessary prelude to the marriage state.

But the injurious consequences of the progress of machinery may be still farther pursued. Almost the only situations, where women and children are able to obtain satisfactory wages for their labour, are populous places, where some flourishing manufactory is established. Hence there has been of late years a continual concourse to towns, which is notoriously unfavourable, as well to the health, as the morals, of the community. And, what is still worse, the several members of a family, instead of working together at home, or

under the inspection of some person, who is responsible for their moral conduct, are employed in crouded and unhealthy work-rooms, amidst a promiscuous assemblage, where, such is the contagion of bad example, the most profligate character too generally corrupts all the rest.

It is not intended by the above remarks to deny or dispute the general advantages of a division of labour, and mechanical improvements. But in the course of human affairs, evil is ever found incorporated with the good. And, if every endeavour is not used to counteract, or obviate, the injurious consequences that have resulted from that more advantageous direction of industry, which has obtained of late years; it is too possible, they may preponderate the benefits, that have been experienced from it. Little reason have we to exult in that accession of external prosperity and aggrandizement, which is purchased at the expence of virtue. Nor is there any real advancement of national wealth and power, if the superior profits of a few individuals are squandered in superfluous indulgences, in the encouragement probably of foreign, rather than domestic, industry, while the comforts of the mass of the people are diminished; while fewer industrious hands are employed; and matrimony ceases to be desired. The several advantages, then, that are usually attributed to mechanical improvements, cannot be readily conceded, unless

unless some new employment is speedily found for those hands, that are thereby deprived of their accustomed occupations.

Let us not, however, impede the progress of improvement, but only be vigilant in providing against the incidental evils. While those, that are engaged in business, are allowed to improve their capitals in any way, that is most agreeable and advantageous to themselves, let the crumbs, that are suffered to fall from the stores of affluence, for the benefit of the necessitous, or a portion of those funds, that are now too commonly devoted to superfluous consumption, or a part also of that impost, which by law is destined for the relief of the poor, by a judious application, be employed as a subsidiary capital, in rescuing from base and oppressive inutility, hose, who, by ignorance, or any accident, or misfor-une, are destitute of occupation, or are unable to fill up, ith some profitable employment, the leisure intervals, at occur in the midst of their ordinary avocations. And bours they are by these means enabled to perform, ould constitute an accession of so much productive dustry to the community, with an addition of personal mfort and enjoyment, and it is hoped also, with some are of moral improvement. For, not to mention the atural effect of industry upon the mind, it certainly oncerns us, in the promotion of a benevolent under-king, to be influenced by other considerations, besides merely

merely a temporary accession of national wealth, as the morality, health, and comfort, whether of the objects of our charitable regards, or of the community in general.

To rescue, then, one part of the female poor from a state of torpid inactivity, to stop the rapid and alarming progress of moral contagion in another; and to impress all with a more awakening sense of religion, than is commonly at this time discerned in the lower stations of life,---are the objects at present proposed; which, it is conceived, will be accomplished, in a very satisfactory degree, by the general establishment of schools, in which, besides receiving such instruction, as is immediately adapted to the improvement of the mind, poor girls are taught the use of their needle, and any other domestic employments, that can be conveniently learnt at school, and are exercised also at least in some one species of industry, by which, according to the circumstances of the district, they may most profitably employ their leisure intervals, or gain a livelihood, when destitute of other work, or, again, supply themselves and families with some articles of primary necessity.

Notwithstanding the modern improvements in machinery, I am disposed to think, that a private family will often find it more profitable to manufacture various articles for its own use, than to purchase them loaded with the expence of carriage, and the profits of a

number

number of tradesmen, before they are retailed for consumption. At least, the dometic commodity is commonly much more serviceable, than what is bought at shops. A maufacturer finds it his interest to keep down the prices of his goods, and to render them more beautiful externally, though, equally, at the expence of their essential value. And in this way I suspect the public suffers itself to be imposed upon. If this is true, it encourages us once more to teach the poor their ancient employments. Of this, however, we may be asssured, that in the same time they may produce, at least, as much work as formerly, or indeed more, in consequence of the improvements, which even the more simple implements and machinery have experienced; which is certainly better than that that time should be unprofitably consumed.

AGAIN, the peculiar circumstances of new colonies, and the monopolizing principles, that have been incorporated into our colony trade, were particularly instrumental in effecting that change, which has been produced in the distribution of our national employments. The average rate of profit has been raised above its proper level, and an undue proportion of the national capital has been diverted to the American trade.* The consequence

* THE reader is referred to Smith's Wealth of Nations, b. 4, c. 7, where this subject is considered at large.

quence has been, that we have become manufacturers to the inhabitants of another hemisphere, while we have been obliged to purchase many of the most necessary articles of comfortable subsistence from other countries. In the process of time, according to the natural course of human affairs, we cannot but expect some alteration will be effected in the arrangement of our commercial transactions. Already a large proportion of the American colonies are emancipated from us. And as their population increases, and more land is cleared, and brought into a state of perfect cultivation, the price of labour will be lowered; and they will be enabled to make a variety of commodities for their own use at a less expence than they can purchase them of us. This event we ought to have in expectation, and be prepared to meet it; particularly by instructing more and more hands to manufacture such articles, as enter into common use at home, and which we now frequently purchase from abroad. I need not enlarge on the expediency of training up as many as possible from the earliest periods to some kind of profitable industry, or teaching them to supply their own wants, as the best means not only of securing ourselves from the effects of a disadvantageous competition with foreigners; but also of keeping down the rate of profit, and the price of commodities at home.

CARRYING the several preceding observations in our minds, we may now proceed to treat of the selection of a profitable employment for a school of industry. In general, we should be disposed to adopt that employment, which is the most flourishing in the district, where the school is established. But perhaps it is deemed expedient to introduce some new species of industry, in consequence of the decline of an established branch of trade, or the loss sustained by the poor of their accustomed employments.* In this case the following considerations will merit attention. Every benevolent

* IN these instances, it is much better to endeavour to introduce some more profitable employment, than to allow the poor a bounty on the work performed in their present unprofitable occupations, as was recommended by the Society of Industry in Essex, and is now practised at Chipping-Ongar, and some other places, as it has been for some years in parts of Hampshire. For what would the consequence be, if this practice were rendered general? The manufacturer, finding more persons disposed to work for him, would get his work done at a less expence to himself, and a greater burden would be imposed on the parish. The real price of labour, however, would be raised. At the same time, the natural level of employments, instead of being promoted, would be impeded. On the contrary, by diverting a number of hands to a new and more profitable employment, the wages would, probably, be raised even in the former employment; and thus both parties, those who have learnt the new work, and those who adhere to their former occupations, would be benefited.

nevolent person would naturally wish, that the children under his patronage should be taught that work, by which they could earn the most. But the superior earnings in one employment above another, are probably no more, than a reasonable compensation for some particular inconvenience, or disadvantage. High wages often depend on the caprice of fashion. The fashion may change to-morrow, and nothing more is to be gained by the same employment. Articles that enter into more general use may not pay so well; but, as the demand is more regular, the wages are subject to less variation. Commodities also prepared for a foreign market are exposed to greater fluctuations, than those, that are consumed at home. For reasons already assigned we shall be disposed to approve of an employment, by which, if the demand, and earnings, in the way of trade, are diminished, the children may at least supply the necessary wants of themselves and their families; especially, if it can be carried on at home, and is easily resumed during any intervals that occur in the course of family business. Such an occupation also will justly claim a preference, as, in all its circumstances, is the most favourable to good morals. The healthiness and cleanliness of an employment are farther objects of recommendation. Nor is it a trivial consideration, even in a moral view, that it should amuse, as well as occupy, the mind, and restrain it from wandering to every

every passing object. Perhaps, on an attentive examination, it will be found, that the general character of the lower classes depends much more on the nature of their accustomed employments, than is commonly suspected. We could wish, therefore, that girls should be trained up to such occupations as have a tendency to generate a sedate and orderly deportment, such as exhilarate the animal spirits, without retaining them in a state of continual agitation, such also as are rather sedentary, but accompanied with a moderate share of exercise, without occasioning so much wear and tear of cloths, as unavoidably to habituate them to rags.

In casting my eye over EDEN's State of the Poor, I perceive, that the most profitable employment for poor women and children, in country places, has of late years been straw-work for hats, baskets, and other fancy goods. But this is an employment, that is much influenced by fashion; and of late the demand for this kind of work has been considerable. Consequently, in the district, where this manufacture is chiefly carried on, the weekly earnings of a woman appear to have varied, in the course of a few years, from 2s. 6d. to 12s.* There is not much in this fashion to recommend it, but the consideration, that it gives employment to numbers

* I HAVE reason to think, that this is not now so profitable an employment as it was when Eden's work was published, in consequence, probably, of the numbers that have learnt the art.

of poor women and children; and, that it is better to have such fashions, as employ poor females, than those, that call able-bodied men from occupations more suited to their sex. But fashions are not always influenced by such laudable considerations.* If, then, the wages in this employment are a little higher than in others, we have no security, that they will continue so, or even that they should not be depressed much lower. However, it is an employment, that might with great propriety be taught in the districts, that are most favourable to the prosecution of it, such, for instance, where rye is much cultivated, as rye straw is esteemed the best for this kind of work; and which have a ready communication with Dunstable, or some other town, where a manufactory of this kind is established. For, it seems, the braids only, for the most part, should be made by the poor in the country villages, and sent to towns to be worked up, where fashions are better understood.

LACE-MAKING appears, according to Eden, to have been the next most profitable employment for poor women and girls. But, unhappily, it is not an healthy work.

* As it is often a matter of perfect indifference, of what articles particular parts of dress, furniture, &c. are composed, so long as they are the fashion, it is much to be wished, that those persons who have the power of controlling fashions, would benevolently promote such fashions, as are best calculated to give employment to the poor in each district.

work. It is not only sedentary, but confines the body to a cramped and injurious posture. It is, however, less objectionable as an employment for filling up a few intervals in the midst of more active occupations, than as the chief business of a person's life.

KNITTING is a kind of work that is easy and convenient to be learnt and practised any where. It can be resumed with the greatest ease at every vacant interval. It also may be applied to the use of the knitter and her family. But it does not appear to be a very profitable employment. It can, however, be practised when the attention is partially engaged by other objects. Of this also, I am persuaded, that by making the usual allowance of the price of the worsted or yarn for the trouble of knitting, a pair of knitted stockings is a great deal more serviceable, and cheaper in the end, than the wove stockings, that are commonly bought at shops.

BUT, perhaps, there is no kind of work, of which so much may be urged in recommendation, as an employment for poor girls in a school of industry, as the spinning of flax or hemp. It is a cleanly employment, and causes no perceptible wear and tear of cloths. But though sedentary, it is accompanied with a degree of exercise, that is very healthy, yet not so, as to occasion much fatigue; and for that reason it is better for filling up the intervals of stirring work in a family, as it is on every account convenient to be carried on in a private

house. It is also applicable to the spinner's own use in an article of primary necessity. It is not quite so profitable indeed, as the two first-mentioned employments. But the tax lately imposed on the exportation of Russian commodities, and the disturbances of Ireland, have both operated as an encouragement to the linen-trade at home. And the union of the two kingdoms, if it is accompanied with a perfect freedom of commercial intercourse, will probably render it advantageous to each country to manufacture at least a sufficient quantity of woollen and linen for its own use, in lieu of regarding them separately, as the staple trades of each kingdom. Perhaps somewhat more may be earned by spinning flax by the use of the two-handed wheel, which, I understand, is not equally applicable to hemp.* But hemp is the more serviceable commodity for common use. The spinning of hemp and line by hand is not at present so much affected by spinning mills, and other such machinery, as the spinning of wool and cotton; and there is reason to think, it is not likely

* An improvement, it is said, has been made in Scotland on the two-handed flax wheel, by which it will do a half more work; but the price is at least double that of the ordinary wheel. If it is easy to procure the improved wheels, it would be proper to introduce them into a school of industry, where flax is spun. A small portion of the additional work performed would soon liquidate the extraordinary expence.

likely to be. And the demand for linen is so very extensive amongst all orders of people, that not much inconvenience, it is probable, would result from rendering this employment almost universal. Less linen, in consequence, would be imported from abroad. If a greater number of poor persons were taught to spin their own linen, many genteel families would probably do the same by the assistance of their servants and poor neighbours. And an admirable opportunity it would afford for gentlemen's families in the country to find work for the poor people in their village, or neighbourhood, that are at any time in want of employment.

LINEN is one of the easiest and simplest manufactures. It requires no capital, nor expensive machinery: and no operation is necessary, about the ordinary kinds of linen, that cannot be conveniently performed in a private family, and a country village. It is worthy of notice also, that we chiefly import the coarser linens from abroad, while more than enough fine linen is manufactured in the British dominions for our own use, and the colony trade. The reason why one nation is able to undersell another in its own market in a commodity, which it is capable of manufacturing for itself, is, probably, either that it produces the rude material in greater abundance, or of a better quality; that it possesses more advantageous machinery; has a larger capital; or that the price of labour, or rate of profit, is

lower.

lower. No nation in Europe produces a better material for linen or hempen cloth for domestic use, than we do: no superior machinery is employed abroad, than almost every cottager here can easily be provided with: no nation has a larger trading capital, though little or no capital is necessary in that branch of the trade, which is carried on in private for common use: the rate of profit is lower here than in most parts of the continent: and if the higher price of labour is set against the expence of water and land carriage, the profits of a number of merchants and tradesmen, besides various duties, there can be little doubt, but we could supply our own wants in the article of linen, at a less expence than we can purchase it from abroad, if only the cultivation of the material, and the manufacture of it, are duly encouraged and promoted. In short, the manufacture of linen for common use appears the most proper *succedaneum*, whenever the poor are deprived of their usual employments. And, probably, in course of time, it will be rendered the chief occupation of poor women, when almost all our other manufactures are carried on by the aid of expensive machinery, steam-engines, horses, &c. and men, rather than poor women and girls. Let us only anticipate the event, by training up our poor females to it, whenever they are in want of other profitable employment, before our population has been sensibly impaired.

THERE are, however, some districts, to which this work is more particularly adapted, such as those, that abound with dairy farms. It is necessary often to retain more females in a family, on account of the dairy, than there is regular employment for at all times. Spinning hemp or flax for the use of the family is a very convenient occupation at those seasons, when there is least work in the dairy; especially, as it can be performed with ease over a kitchen fire-side in a winter's evening. The same strong and moist land also, that yields the greatest abundance of good pasture, produces the best crops of hemp.

WHEREVER the spinning of hemp, or flax, is generally introduced, it certainly will be proper to encourage the cultivation of them. Hemp would be found an excellent first crop in many tracts of waste land, which, it is hoped, will be brought into a state of cultivation in the couse of a few years. It is a crop, that requires a good deal of labour, and would therefore furnish plenty of employment for boys, while girls are engaged in spinning the produce. Hemp and flax are usually regarded as exhausting crops. Hemp is said to be less so, than flax; and is hardly to be considered as such, if it is pulled, while it is still in a growing state, and its stalk is full of oil, in which condition it is by far the best for the purpose of a manufacture. It then, indeed, has the effect of a meliorating crop. The ground is not

only

only left free from weeds, but in a loose and friable state. The following incidental advantages may also be noticed, as adding to the value of the crops themselves. Hemp is said to have the property of driving away almost all insects, that feed on vegetables. Hence, in some parts of the continent, it is not unusual to sow a belt of hemp round gardens, or any crops, that their owners are most anxious to preserve. The water of the hemp and line pits is an admirable manure, if spred over pasture land by means of water carts, or in the way of irrigation. It is esteemed much superior to the dra ings of a farm-yard. Even the land, on which the retted flax, or hemp, is spred to be dried, is greatly improved by it; so much so indeed, that coarse sour pasture will be changed into the sweetest herbage.

In attempting to introduce any new manufacture into a particular district, care should be taken, that proper persons are instructed in every operation, that is necessary, before the commodity is fit for use. One or two boys would probably heckle all the hemp or line, that is grown in a parish for its own consumption. A loom or two also would be desirable, and sufficient in most parishes. I cannot here but observe, that the weaving of linen is an employment, that can very easily be performed by women, especially with the advantage of the fly-shuttle. It is not to be wished therefore, that this work should be entirely usurped by men. If

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a few parishes should at any time be incorporated for the relief of their common poor, and a house of industry erected, that house might be rendered very serviceable, in introducing any new and profitable manufacture into the district; as any such branches of the manufacture might be performed in the house, as could be less conveniently undertaken in a private family.

THE above remarks, it is obvious, have respect chiefly to the education of poor girls in industry and virtue. Boys are commonly trained up from an early period of life to the proper business of their stations. And the very necessity of being constantly engaged in some kind of employment is a species of discipline, beyond what poor girls, in general, experience. Boys, therefore, have not the same need of the discipline of a school of industry; nor could the usual employments of their sex be conveniently taught at school. To train up boys to the proper occupations of the other sex is objectionable on various accounts. There is an abundance of employment for men: but it is an object of no small difficulty to find a sufficiency of profitable work for women and girls. What, therefore, is chiefly wanted with regard to boys, is to find them employment abroad, while they are yet children, and, if possible, under the superintendance of some person, that is responsible for their diligence and good behaviour. The best school of industry, therefore, for them would be a potatoe-ground, or a

garden

garden for the production of cheap and bulky vegetables, such as are most valuable in a poor family. And, if a large portion of ground were allotted for the use of a parish workhouse, a school of industry, or a soup establishment, it would afford an admirable opportunity of training up boys, under the inspection of a careful workman, or gardener, to an employment, that is very desirable in the lower stations of life. Some attention, however, is due to the improvement of their minds. But, if only they could be collected together for an hour or two a few evenings in the week, after the business of the day is concluded, and again a few hours on a Sunday, and occasionally visited by the clergyman, or some neighbouring gentleman, they might be instructed in every thing, it could be deemed generally necessary, or practicable, that they should be taught.

THE care of poor girls is incomparably more urgent. Too generally are they trained up in no habits of profitable industry, in no kind of domestic economy and good arrangement, and almost in barbarous ignorance of moral and religious obligation. And, in consequence, the number of steady and industrious workmen appears much to exceed that of women, who are equally careful and diligent in their sphere. This surely is not to be attributed to any superior perversity of the female mind. For I would appeal to any person, that has had the smallest intercourse with poor children,---whether

ther the girls are not by far the most docile in every branch of school education, whether their attention is not more easily commanded, and habits sooner formed in them of regular and steady application, accompanied with a much more anxious desire and endeavour to acquit themselves to the satisfaction of their superintendents. That they are more docile than boys, in the pursuit of sedentary and domestic attainments, seems, indeed, a manifest indication of the nature of the employments, for which providence has designed them. Their helpless and degraded condition is therefore to be attributed to their want of opportunities of better education, which it is incumbent on us to provide for them.

To secure them effectually from immorality and error, we must teach them to respect their own characters, by first, indeed, respecting them ourselves, and conferring on them an essential value. If early marriages are of the highest importance to the interests of a community, in a moral view, as well as on every other important consideration, it must be our endeavour to render them more desirable in the marriage state for their ability to assist in the maintenance and education of a family, and to add to the mass of domestic comforts by economy and cleanliness. The use of the needle, if they are properly taught and accustomed to make and mend their own clothes, is a very valuable attainment to poor girls, not only as it may recommend them to

better services, but as it habituates them to the comfort of tight clothing, and thereby disposes them to have a greater relish for domestic comforts in general, and to train up their children hereafter to have the same, which is in itself a powerful motive to industry. It is of consequence also to give them a turn for such occupations and amusements, as are calculated to attach them to their homes, and to render the society of their families agreeable to them. In this view reading is a desirable attainment. It will fill up the intervals of common employments in a profitable way, and prepare them for a more satisfactory and improving intercourse with their children.

It is unnecessary to expatiate, I should hope, on the natural effect of habitual neatness on the moral character, not only of that sex, on whose assiduity domestic neatness chiefly depends, but of every other member of the same family. It prepares the mind for conceiving a sense of moral decency and propriety, and is itself one of the most effectual safeguards to virtue. It adds in appearance to personal respectability, and seems to raise the poor into a higher rank in the scale of society, than many, whose means of subsistence are more ample than their own; and, at the same time, it renders a good character, in reality, of greater value to them. Whereas a want of external decorum almost precludes sentiments of moral propriety; and the wretched filthy hovels

hovels of many of the poor, while they are nearly inaccessible to persons of cleanly habits, can hardly be regarded otherwise, than as nurseries of wickedness and prostitution. It is also a consideration of no small importance, that domestic comfort tends to strengthen the union between the members of the same family. An extensive intercourse and communication with the world at large, or amongst persons on a footing of equality, and mutual independence, is too generally injurious in its consequences upon the character: whereas the society of those, between whom there subsist the most intimate bonds of connection, the greatest reciprocity of duties and obligations, and a chain of subordination, is, on the other hand, in the highest degree improving.

AGAIN, as sentiments of piety and devotion are peculiarly pleasing in the female character, while the absence of them is offensive, so, we may remark, the minds of girls, at an early period, are much more susceptible of pious impressions, than those of boys. In this, also, we cannot fail to admire the wisdom, as well as the benevolence, of providence. Men, by the nature of their employments, are unavoidably exposed to many powerful temptations and allurements to seduce them from the practice of integrity and virtue. They are necessarily led into a more extensive intercourse with mankind, and are often brought into connection with per-

sons of dissolute characters. And, when the mind has once received an injurious propensity, if it is not speedily restored to a state of self-recollection, it too commonly proceeds from one species of misconduct to another, till it is entirely alienated from God. The more domestic occupations of the other sex seclude them from the same degree of danger and temptation. If, then, they are duly trained up to such employments, and properly attached to their homes, and their breasts are early replenished with just and lively sentiments of God and religion, they may ever prove the happy instruments in the hands of providence of recalling the rest of their families, as they return home to their society, to a sense of their duty, whenever their minds have been led astray, before they are precipitated into any grossly erroneous conduct.

From what has been said, it cannot but be inferred, that the manners of females have a very powerful influence over the conduct of the other sex. Indeed the most striking peculiarities of national character are often apparently to be referred to the education, that females are allowed to experience, the respect and estimation, in which they are held, and the degree of intercourse, that is permitted between the sexes. If, then, we can only add to the respectability of the female character, we lay the foundation of a radical national reform. This is the more manifest, as, in poor families,

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the first formation of the mind, and of the habits of early youth, in both sexes, is necessarily permitted to lie almost exclusively within the mother's department.

I WISH not to enlarge on those topics, that are addressed rather to the feelings, than the judgment, when so many important arguments, that are founded on the principles of the truest policy, unite in evincing the necessity of an improved education of poor girls. But, surely, it is a consideration, that will operate with not less force on the understanding, than the heart; that, as we have any regard to the moral deportment of society, it is incumbent upon us to multiply preservatives and safeguards to the virtue of that part of the creation, to whom a single slip of human frailty is peculiarly fatal in its several consequences. Whatever additional penalties may be deemed requisite in the apprehension of some to restrain the illicit intercourse between the sexes in the higher walks of life, at least it becomes us to extend our kind protection to that degraded part of the sex, whose chastity too generally is fortified by almost no advantages of education, and guarded by no ceremonial restraint, and no share of those artificial and distant manners, by which, under the guidance of a cautious parent, the virtue of their superiors is secured.

IT is needles to expatiate on the general effect of school discipline upon the mind, especally upon the female character, as it will be readily conceded; that

regular attendance at school, and steady application to some kind of intellectual or manual employment, not only produce orderly and sedate habits, but generate a degree of activity and energy of character; that also, by being kept still and quiet a number of hours each day, and debarred from all conversation, except what relates to the present employments, the mind is mollified, it is taught subordination, its passions are cooled, and its wanton and disorderly propensities subdued.

THE circumstances of the times indicate the necessity of our directing a larger share of our attention to the education of poor children. To whatever causes it is to be attributed, it must be confessed, that the several ties of connection, by which, it is expedient that the different orders of the community, especially those in the immediate vicinity of each other, should be united in the bonds of social harmony, are now much fewer and weaker, than formerly; and that all improving intercourse between the higher and lower classes is almost entirely suspended. The labouring class, which indeed is the mass of the population, have little prospect, or hope, of any essential improvement in their condition, at the same time, that, by the operation of the poor's laws, they are relieved from the fear of any, that is much worse, than their present; and are rendered in a manner independent of their superiors, even of those, from whom the funds of their relief are derived. That

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state of mind, which is almost equally devoid of fear and hope; and liberated from the necessity of forethought, is extremely unfavourable to general good conduct, and induces profligate habits. It is not intended to speak with approbation of a state of absolute and servile dependence. But that kind of dependence, which is founded either on a reciprocity of obligations, or on a well-grounded expectation of favours, as testimonies of personal approbation, and of relief also, and consolation, under afflictions, proportioned in some degree to the virtues, as well as the sufferings, of the distressed objects, is highly improving to the mind, and very conducive to social harmony. From want of this species of dependence, the lower orders of the community are prepared to receive, as every effort has of late years been made to excite, impressions unfavourable to the higher classes. They are either devoid of almost all sense of religion, or are easily persuaded to adopt such notions of religion, as tend most to alienate their affections from their superiors, and dissolve the bonds of social connection. Every measure, therefore, ought to be pursued of multiplying opportunities of intercourse, and sources of attachment, between the individuals of each different class. In particular, it should be the object of our endeavour to secure the affections of the rising generation of the poor; and to train them up in habits of respect and esteem for the higher classes. We must,

must, in the school-room, commence an habitual communication with our inferiors, which, at the same time that it is conciliatory, will be found not less improving to ourselves, than it is to them. Thus will the children of the meanest peasant be brought forward to the notice of their superiors; they will soon learn to appreciate that notice; and will be sensible of the greater value and importance of a good character, in proportion as their characters are better known.

More money, there is little doubt, has been expended in a charitable way of late years, than formerly, in promoting the education of poor children; often, it is feared, with but little effect; as we are disposed to conclude, when we have respect to the very contemptible proficiency, whether in reading or work, that is usually made in the generality of village schools. Indeed the mistresses, or masters, of these schools have, too commonly, but little ability to teach; while the poor themselves appear to have as little sense of the value of education, and suffer their children to go to school, rather to be out of the way, when there is no employment for them at home, than with the expectation of much improvement. We are not, therefore, to be surprized at the want of diligence in the children. If a smaller number of children, in the lower stations of life, formerly acquired a smattering of reading, many experienced a much better education at home, with regard to

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the formation of their manners, and instruction in common employments, while their parents were yet little farmers, or raised in a small degree, by some species of independent property, or employment, above the lowest class of day-labourers. Reading, however, if it is not regarded as an indispensable qualification, is, at least, a valuable acquisition. But one of the principal advantages to be proposed in the education of poor children consists in a certain civilization of manners, and an improved turn of sentiment, which are the natural and obvious result of frequent and habitual intercourse with persons of superior intellectual attainments, and more refined manners, than those, with whom they chiefly associate at home. But it is not to be expected, that their manners will be much improved, if they have no opportunity of profiting by the society of any person of more respectable qualifications, than a village schoolmistress. In short, to effect a perfect reformation in the manners of the lower classes, it seems absolutely necessary that their superiors should take the direction of the education of poor children into their own hands, or that parochial schools should, in general, be under the controul and inspection of some one or more persons of respectable character and condition, in the capacity of visitors. The visitor's office will be to prescribe the plan of education, and partly to assist in the conduct of it; at least from time to time to examine the proficiency

ency of the scholars; by pertinent questions and conversations to call forth, and exercise, their intellectual powers; and to animate their diligence by seasonable rewards, and other tokens of approbation. We are not to expect great qualifications in the lowest order of school-mistresses, but with the assistance, and under the direction of such a visitor, a competent knowledge of the work to be performed, and a very moderate share of learning will be found sufficient. When the business of the school is once judiciously regulated, the attendance of the visitor needs by no means to be so frequent, as to be rendered irksome. But let not the trouble, or inconvenience, of this attention to the dearest interests of their inferiors be urged, when such is the very tenure, on which they are allowed to possess the gracious gifts of heaven. Irksome, however, as it may be thought, which yet, I am persuaded, it will not be by those, who have made the trial, it will be found the most valuable and necessary species of beneficence in the present age; and perhaps the only effectual means of ensuring to us a continuance of that prosperity, with which it has hitherto pleased heaven to bless this favoured island; and of precluding those dreadful consequences of a dissolution of social order, by which the neighbouring kingdoms have been overwhelmed. The superior classes, by thus shewing, that they experience an interest in the dearest concerns of their poor neighbours, can hardly

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fail, in the first place, of obtaining the good will of the parents; and, if their intercourse with the children is tempered with mildness and affability, they will be equally certain of securing their affections: they will continually enjoy the satisfaction of contemplating the expanding powers and virtues of their minds under their paternal superintendence; and at an advanced period of life, will experience consolation and support under the increasing infirmities of old age from the friendly solicitude, and grateful attentions of many respectable neighbours, whom their timely beneficence had cautiously guided and directed in the way, in which they should go. What an admirable provision, then, by this species of beneficence, may any person of the smallest share of affluence, and leisure from common employments, lay up in store for the comfort and enjoyment of his advancing years, in a parish, of which he is likely to continue, or will consent to remain, a permanent inhabitant, by training up a succession of useful and faithful domestics, in the first instance, and afterwards of orderly, industrious, and religious neighbours, whose minds are taught betimes to appreciate the value of the obligations conferred, and disposed to make every grateful return. I have, indeed, that opinion of the prevailing benevolence of persons of liberal manners and education, that, if opportunities of interesting communications between them and their inferiors were

multiplied,

multiplied, and more business prescribed to them, that had relation to the circumstances and concerns of the lower orders of the community, they would be rendered in reality more efficient characters; they would exert themselves with a considerable share of laudable zeal and assiduity; they would experience a satisfaction in so doing, beyond what they at present conceive; and would be convinced, that a country residence is by no means inimical to the purest of social enjoyments. The clergy would be more attached to their preferments and parochial duties, and the rich would be more generally resident on their estates.

THESE remarks have respect to the education of the poor in general. But I return to what more immediately relates to the discipline of girls, as being the chief object of our present attention. And in pleading in their behalf, I cannot but observe, in part in my own justification, that in the charitable institutions, which at present exist, for the instruction of poor children, the number of boys, whose education is provided for, exceeds that of girls by a very large amount. According to the accounts published by the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge, it appears, that in the different charity schools of South Britain, exclusive of the metropolis, there are about five times as many boys educated as girls.

FROM the above inquiry an important inference, or two, may now be deduced. In the first place, the kind of institution, that is desired for training up poor girls, is not a mere spinning school. The process of education ought to be a proper pattern, or model, of the business of life. Their employment and duty in life will probably be to discharge the several offices at first of menial servants, and afterwards of wives and mothers, with the fear of God before their eyes; as well as to assist in the maintenance of a family by some species of profitable industry. Let their education, therefore, be calculated to impress them with a sense of religious obligation, as also to prepare them for the various employments of the stations they are expected to occupy, as far as is practicable in a school. Here, then, appears to have been a radical defect in the Lincolnshire spinning schools, whence after flourishing for about eight years, they were suddenly dropped, as if by universal consent. They were not only mere spinning schools, but boys were trained up to the employment of spinning, as well as girls. Hence it was justly alledged, that at the age of twelve or thirteen years, when the children were wanted in service, they were perfectly ignorant of every thing, but spinning; so that it was a long time, before they could be of any real use in their places; and that the boys, by being confined hitherto to a domestic employment, were rendered

so puny and weak, as to be incapable of supporting the fatigue of labour abroad.

It is also recommended that the proposed schools should be entirely unconnected with the general administration of the poor's laws, and supported solely by voluntary contributions, Otherwise, it is much to be feared, that, after a short time, they would be conducted with the same degree of negligence, with which parish business is commonly transacted, and that those persons, who are by far the most proper to superintend them as visitors, considering them as schools of general education, would decline having any concern with them. The profitable industry would then be the only object that is regarded; which in the event, it is not unlikely, would conduce rather to the benefit of interested agents, than of any other party. The poor would be sensible, that their children earn less than they could do at home, and as they derive no other advantage from their schooling, they would decline sending them. It is not, therefore, designed, that the spinning room of a workhouse should be the school of industry, with no other superintendent, than the workhouse master. The proposed schools are intended to have a much more respectable character, and to be open to the reception of children of every class, as well as parish poor, and while they civilize the latter, to be no disgrace to the former. In short, it is desired, that the lower classes

should regard the admission of their children into the school of industry, as an advancement in respectability, in lieu of a degradation to the level of the denizens of a poor-house. It is also designed that these schools should be under the superintendence of a different class of individuals from those, who are commonly intrusted with the administration of parish business, and that those individuals should not be under the controul of a parish vestry, or indeed of any meeting, or committee, of magistrates. We wish to encourage the superior classes to take an active part in promoting the good education of poor children, and there is nothing less to be expected, than that persons of liberal education will be thus active, unless they feel themselves at liberty to follow the bent of their own judgment. Let, then, certain voluntary contributions* be intrusted to the care of the clergyman, or

* A PART, indeed, or all, may be advanced from a parish rate; only let it not be compulsive, but be done by the free consent of the Vestry. If, also, no better mode is practicable, the workhouse may be supplied with an additional quantity of wheels, and the poor be encouraged to send their children to spin; which is only enforcing the act of 43 Eliz. and such, nearly, are the spinning schools, that have been established in various places. But the usual character of workhouses must be improved, before they can be regarded as fit schools for poor children. A school of industry distinct from the workhouse is therefore desired. And the only obstacle, it is conceived, in most parishes, is the want of a convenient school-room, or school-cottage, which yet could be obviated at no very great expence.

or some other competent person, as visitor, with the power of employing them, as he judges most conducive to the designs of the proposed institution. If his employment of them is disapproved of, farther contributions may be withheld, or a different mode of application recommended.

THE greatest difficulties usually occur on the first attempt to institute any thing new. The first schools, established in any district on the principles here recommended, would probably be attended with the heaviest expences, especially, if it should be thought necessary to introduce any new species of industry. Mistresses must then, it is likely, be procured from a distance, by whom an extraordinary premium, or salary, would be expected. Unnecessary expences might also be inadvertently contracted, and injudicious regulations adopted, that might impair the success of the first institutions, and excite a prejudice against them. It is natural, also, for each parish, as well as any benevolent individual, to wish to have some approved model to copy after. Any difficulties or discouragements of this nature, it is conceived, would be most effectually obviated by promoting subscriptions in each district, for the purpose of instituting a few schools, as models for the imitation of the neigbourhood, and the extraordinary expences, that might be necessary at first, would be rendered light, by being shared amongst the subscribers.

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Let a Committee of Industry, consisting of the most active and intelligent gentlemen in the district, be appointed for the purpose of carrying into effect the benevolent intentions of the subscribers, with a power of establishing schools in such situations, where any of the committee would consent to take them under their own immediate inspection. Proper mistresses could be advertised for, or general inquiries instituted in those districts, where the proposed employments of each school are most generally practised. Thus would a fair experiment be made, not only of the success of the institutions themselves, but also of any new species of industry, which it is intended to introduce. Thus, by the benevolent exertions of a few gentlemen, that had a sufficient command of their own time, might the contributions of a large number of subscribers, that had not the same leisure, or powers of beneficence, be applied to the best advantage, and the whole neighbourhood be much benefited in the event. On this account it is, that subscriptions on a larger scale, than such as are merely parochial, are adviseable on various occasions; that the sphere of operation is thereby enlarged to a few of the most zealous and intelligent gentlemen in a district, who are authorized to superintend the application of the contributions. If the subscriptions are sufficiently liberal, and, in this country, there is little doubt, but they will be, if they are patronized in the first in-

stance by gentlemen of respectable and ostensible characters, a portion might be applied towards the erection, where necessary, of convenient school-cottages; and a certain contribution, towards the payment of the primary expences, might be generally offered to any parish in the district, where it is purposed to establish such a school of industry.

We may now proceed to arrange a plan of such a school, as it is the object of these pages to recommend. As the present design is to promote and encourage the universal establishment of schools of industry, it would be imprudent to form the plan of an institution, that could not be easily reduced to practice, in almost every parish where a competent number of scholars could be procured. It will be proper also to guard against unnecessary expences. Indeed, I have no difficulty in asserting, that a school of industry is, for the most part, competent to support itself; and after all the necessary expences are defrayed, to leave a larger surplus for the scholars, than, it is likely, they would earn at home. A school is economical on the principle of a division of labour. The scholars have nothing to divert their attention from the employment before them. An experienced person is constantly with them to keep them at work, and to give them every necessary assistance and instruction: and the parent is more at liberty to pursue her own occupations without interruption.

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A small subscription, however, is advisable, if it be only for the distribution of a few trifling gratuities to the children, as an encouragement to their good behaviour. It would also give the subscribers, or the visitor appointed by them, a right of inspection and controul. But the sums at present expended in many parishes in the education of poor children, or the usual subscriptions to a Sunday school, are abundantly competent to the support of a school of industry.* In short, the principle at present maintained is this, that *by applying a portion of the weekly earnings of each scholar towards the payment of the necessary expences, a small subscription for the benefit of each school would be found sufficient to render the good education of poor girls universal.*

THE easiest and simplest instance of a school resembling those, that are here recommended, would consist only of a little improvement on such schools, as are already established in most parishes. In these schools it is professed to teach children to read, sew, and knit. The school hours are often contracted into a small compass. The children make very little proficiency in reading, and for a great part of the time they are at school, they have no work. It is probable some of the children are sent to school by their charitable neighbours.

* IT is, therefore, much to be wished, that Sunday schools, those for girls at least, were generally converted into such daily schools, as united industry with religious instruction.

neighbours. Let, then, the money, that is expended in the education of those children, be put into the hands of the clergyman, or other proper person, with a power of suggesting any improvements in the present plan of their education: and let him make it his care to see, that the children are constantly supplied with work. Needle-work might be procured of the neighbours, by an offer to take it in at somewhat less than the usual prices. Or, if no better work could be provided, the children might be employed in knitting. The stockings could be sold to the parish officers for the use of the poor, or, at a reduced price, if necessary, to the poor families in the neighbourhood. The profits may be applied to the use of the scholars, after a small portion is deducted for the general benefit of the institution. The same amount of subscription money would then allow of a greater number of scholars, and all parties would be benefited. The scholars would be better taught, and would earn something, even while they are at school. The poor would be more generally assisted in the education of their children, and the mistress would gain more by her profession. And, by such easy and obvious means, a very essential improvement would be effected in most village schools.

But, perhaps, it may be thought more advisable to institute a new school, and to introduce some other, and more profitable employment, than knitting. Let us, then,

then, in the first place, consider, what expences will be necessary, and from what sources they may be defrayed. The primary expences will consist of the purchase of the school furniture, the implements of industry, and, perhaps, cooking utensils, for the purposes hereafter mentioned. The amount will be greater or less, according to the nature of the employments to be pursued. It is proposed, then, that these expences should be defrayed by a subscription; or, if they are advanced from any fund, a portion of the annual contributions may be appropriated to the liquidation of the debt. These articles, it will be recollected, will still retain a saleable value.---The emoluments of the mistress are next to be considered. The usual allowance in country schools is 3d. a week for each scholar. The number of scholars, one mistress can attend to, will depend very much on the nature of the work about which they are employed. For the most part, I am persuaded, one woman may with ease superintend thirty scholars. Three-pence for each of thirty scholars would amount to 7s. 6d. a week; which would be a comfortable provision for a very creditable school-mistress, if, indeed, it is not considered as more than necessary. If a competent mistress is actually resident in the parish. 2d. a week would probably be sufficient, provided thirty scholars could generally be procured. It may possibly be necessary to furnish her with a convenient

room, if she has not one sufficiently capacious in her own cottage, or perhaps to allow her a suitable cottage, rent-free. A little fuel might also be provided for the use of the school, especially, if any thing is cooked, as hereafter proposed. Still let 3d. a week be deducted from the earnings of each scholar; 2d. for the payment of the mistress, and the other penny to be applied to the general fund. This penny *per* week on each scholar, allowing for a few weeks holidays, would amount in the year to £6, or nearly. Out of this sum the rent of the school-room, or cottage, will be paid, and the fuel purchased; and whatever remains, will be employed, in addition to any other surplus money, in gratuities to the scholars. The 3d. a week, and the expence of the materials wasted, or damaged, in learning, must be deducted from the earnings of each scholar, before she is intitled to derive any benefit from her work. The other annual expences will consist of books, and the repair of the school furniture, which together may be stated at two guineas, but probably will not amount to so much. If to these are added three guineas for occasional gratuities to deserving children, the whole will not be equivalent to another penny *per* week from each scholar. And in most parishes, I am persuaded, an annual subscription of five guineas would be found sufficient for the support and encouragement of a respectable school of industry.*

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* INDEED, if a part only of what is now too frequently granted by

In places, where it might be convenient to carry on a regular manufacture, by the aid of schools of industry, the profits, after defraying all the expences, would probably leave a surplus for presents to the children, without deducting any thing from their regular earnings. But as I write chiefly for the use of more obscure parishes, where this is hardly practicable, it is unnecessary that I should enter into a minute calculation of the profits of such a manufacture. According, then, to the above computations, the following terms of subscription might be proposed:---that a donation, at first, perhaps, of 10s. 6d. towards the payment of the primary expences, and 5s. annually, should entitle a subscriber to recommend one scholar; that a donation of one guinea, and 10s. annually, should intitle him to recommend two scholars, and so on in proportion. An annual subscription, therefore, of five guineas, would intitle the subscribers to recommend twenty-one scholars out of the thirty; and the visitor and clergyman should have the privilege of nominating the other nine.

AMONGST

by a parish to the poorer families, only to silence importunity, especially in the article of clothing, were much more advantageously distributed, through the medium of the school of industry, in such a manner, as to operate as a reward and encouragement to the diligence and good behaviour of the children, and an inducement to the parents to send them regularly to school, it might possibly be sufficient to render all other contributions unnecessary.

AMONGST other objects of instruction in a school of industry, it is much to be wished, that the children should be practised in economical cookery. We find an extraordinary prejudice in the minds of the poor against adopting any change of diet; which makes them equally averse from learning any new preparation. The only way, therefore, of effectually introducing any new economical dishes into general use amongst the poor, is to habituate the children to the use of them from an early period, and to teach them to prepare them. It is proposed, therefore, that a cheap mess be provided for the children at noon on school days, or whenever it is convenient, whether of soup, rice-pudding, some preparation of potatoes, &c. The same fire, that is necessary to warm the school, would boil the pot. Even in summer-time, a very small quantity of fuel, judiciously managed in a proper stove, would stew four

* A COMPOSITION of about three parts coal-dust, or culm, and one part clay, or loam, well mixed together, and, when sufficiently dry, made up into small oval balls about the size of a common lemon, is allowed to constitute as cheap and serviceable a fuel, as any the poor can use. For the purpose only of boiling a pot, or kettle, in summer time, it is hardly possible to conceive any thing cheaper, than the following preparation:—Let the clay and coals, so mixed together, be formed into a kind of chimney, or furnace, from one foot and a half to two feet high; the hollow cylinder being about five or six inches diameter, and the walls five or six inches thick;

four gallons of soup, which would be sufficient for 30 scholars and the mistress; for the mistress may reasonably be allowed a mess with her scholars, in addition to her other perquisites, for her trouble in superintending the cooking. But the bigger girls should in turn be employed in the cooking, and might be detained each day in the evening, after the other scholars are dismissed, to prepare the articles for the next day's mess. The messes, however, must be paid for out of the earnings of the children. It appears, from a variety of experiments, that, when provisions are moderately cheap, and purchased in considerable quantities, and such articles would be procured as are cheapest at the time, these messes would not amount to more than a penny each.*

But

thick; with an air-hole in front, at the bottom, about five or six inches square, from whence the ashes may be occasionally raked. A handful of sticks, or dried heath, thrown down at the top, or thrust in at the air-hole, will be sufficient to light it at any time, when it is thoroughly dry, or after it has been once used: and the fire may be instantly extinguished by closing the funnel, and the air-hole, by flat stones. This structure will last a fortnight, or longer, according to the use, that is made of it.

* The rice-puddings a the Foundling Hospital, allowing for the different prices of milk in town and country, the dinners at Epping, and Oakham spinning-school, noticed in the Reports of the Society for bettering the condition of the poor, may be adduced as instances of this. But the following is a cheaper preparation of rice than rice-pudding. Let the rice be first boiled in a

considerable

But no girl is to be intitled to a dinner, till she can earn sufficient to pay for it, after deducting the proposed 3d. a week, unless her parents consent to pay the penny. The remainder of the earnings of each girl, after the dinners are paid for, and 3d. deducted, will be in part, perhaps, remitted in money to her parents, and in part expended

considerable quantity of water, till the whole is absorbed. Two quarts, or more, may be used to a pound of rice. Then add some skim-milk, (a quart may suffice,) with a little treacle. Let it continue to stew till the milk also is absorbed. It will be then of the consistence of baked rice-pudding, and as palatable. A larger proportion of milk would improve it a little, but not materially. Indeed it is very good, if water only is used. Let me also subjoin, that if the bones, and fragments of cold meat and fat, and crusts of bread in a gentleman s family, which are now too frequently given only to dogs, were neatly and carefully preserved, and stewed in the pot-liquor, that might otherwise have been thrown away, with a sufficient quantity of the cheapest vegetables, and proper seasoning, it would make a very cheap, and a very nourishing and palatable mess for a number of poor children, or other poor people. By the aid of a digester, the bare bones themselves, with a sufficient quantity of vegetables, would make excellent soup. Gravy too, or dripping, it may be added, go much farther, than the meat itself, in making soup; as does also the fat. Perhaps some charitable pers n, taking advantage of these hints, may occasionally supply the children of a school of industry with a comfortable dinner, at almost no expence to themselves. I may add, what an immense saving would it constitute to the nation, if there were but one Digester in every parish for dissolving the bones of the animal food, consumed in the principal families, for the use of the poor.

expended in clothing for herself, or some of her family. The clothing the girls should be taught to make up; and when she has any such employment, it will be sufficient if she performs so much only of the profitable work, as is necessary to cover the weekly expences. If now the employments of the school are judiciously selected, and pursued with assiduity, there can be little doubt, but the more expert scholars, when their attention is not much called off from the profitable industry to any other work, might earn with ease 6d. a day.* Hence admitting that there are five working days and a half in the week, after deducting three-pence, there would remain no less than 2s. 6d. to be expended for the benefit of each such scholar, or the use of her parents' family. And this, perhaps, with the addition of occasional gratuities and rewards, of no inconsiderable value to poor children, besides the advantage of being brought forward to notice, and the favours, that notice must eventually secure them. Hence by the general establishment of such schools, a number of girls, that are now loitering at home, with no small injury to their manners and characters, while they are contributing almost

* THAT this is practicable, is sufficiently proved under my own observation in my own parish of Boxted, and the adjoining one of Nayland, in the employment of spinning hemp; where many children, after the practice of a few weeks only, have been able to earn 6d. a day, and some more.

almost nothing towards their own maintenance, would be trained up in orderly and decorous habits, and put into the way of earning, for the present, perhaps one comfortable meal a day, besides a necessary supply of clothing, and a considerable surplus, it is probable, for the benefit of their parents: at the same time, that they are better trained up for menial servants, and the future employments of their lives.

In towns, and populous parishes, which admit of the establishment of several schools of industry, it may be proper to have different schools for different kinds of work; one, for instance, for sewing or knitting, one for spinning flax or hemp, one for spinning Jersey, &c. or, perhaps, different rooms and mistresses, as branches only of the same establishment: and the children, at the consent of the visitors and their parents, might be occasionally removed from one to another. And, by thus attempting a variety of employments, it will be found after a little experience, which species of industry is best adapted to the circumstances of each district; as also on the decline of one employment, it will be rendered more easy to have recourse to some other.

I have hitherto considered only the more necessary expences of the proposed institutions. But schools of industry may often be inspected and assisted by benevolent persons in affluent circumstances, that would willingly contribute more largely, when any laudable object

is

is proposed to be effected by it. To found a school on too expensive a plan is rather injudicious, as it discourages others from imitating it. I may be allowed, therefore, to suggest a species of expenditure, that would not at all impair the general success of such institutions. The school cottage would afford an admirable opportunity for making a fair trial of the value of any improvements in the construction of cottage-chimnies, fire-places, stoves, cooking utensils, and whatever else might be conducive to increase the comforts of poor families, or diminish their expences; and for exhibiting them for the inspection of the immediate neighbours, and the instruction of provincial workmen.

Let us now take a transient view of the business of the school each day. In summer-time the school may be opened at six in the morning: let the names be called over soon after, and prayers read. Let the children be employed at the profitable industry till half an hour after eight; and then be allowed half an hour for breakfast. When they return to school at nine, let them read, spell, &c. in turn, and work till one; when a cheap mess may be provided for them. Let them return to school again at two, and read, &c. and work till six; when prayers should be read, and the children dismissed, unless the visitor should think this a convenient opportunity to examine any of them, or instruct them himself, which he would do according to his own

discretion. They would then be at home in time to enjoy the society of their father on his return from his daily labours, to entertain him with a satisfactory account of the day's proficiency, and partake with him in his humble repast. In winter the hours of schooling must be a little contracted, and limited by the day-light. The children may then be expected to have got their breakfast before they come to school, and be allowed one respite only of an hour at noon. On Saturdays, let the children be dismissed at noon, or immediately after dinner, that they may be at liberty the rest of the day to assist their parents in washing and mending their clothes against Sunday, cleaning the house, or any other extraordinary work that may always be deferred to this day. On Sundays, the children should be expected to attend church, and may be detained together some part of the day for the purpose of religious instruction, at the discretion of the clergyman or visitor. When no better mode of instruction is provided, Sunday Schools undoubtedly merit approbation. But there are reasonable objections to Sunday Schools, that confine children eight or nine hours in a day, when those children enjoy the benefit of instruction every day in the week. A Sunday is the only day when a labouring man has the power of really enjoying the society of his family. Let him have every enjoyment he can possibly derive from it: and the society of his children may

restrain

restrain him from frequenting an ale-house, or falling into profligate company. If, also, he has some sense of religion, let him be induced to embrace this best opportunity, that presents itself, of taking his part in the religious education of his children. Each poor family ought to be seriously advised and encouraged to occupy some portion of the Lord's day in family devotions, and provoking one another to good works. This heavenly employment would help to unite the affections of the several members of the same family, and give a zest to the day, which would cause them to hail its return. Repeating lessons *memoriter* I conceive to be a very profitable exercise for poor children. It quickens and invigorates their intellectual faculties, and perpetuates the remembrance of many important sentiments. Let the children, then, have a lesson to learn by heart every week, that may employ them at their leisure time on a Sunday, and which they may be previously exercised in reading, whether catechetical instructions, hymns, prayers, or select passages of scripture.---A few weeks vacation may be proper at Harvest.

It is unnecessary, that I should enter into a detail of the prizes and gratuities, that may be offered for the encouragement of the children, as each visitor will be best able to judge, what rewards will be most proper in the school he superintends, from the nature of the employments, and the money he has to distribute. The

following

following suggestions may therefore suffice. The earnings in the profitable employment will of themselves operate, as a reward and encouragement of industry; and therefore it might seem, that the mental acquirements, as yielding no present emolument, would be the more proper objects of prizes. The children should also take their ranks, and walk in order to and from church, according to their scholarship. Still it may not be improper to quicken their diligence, and excite them from one degree of proficiency to another, whether in their learning or work, by the offer of little rewards. Repetitions are certainly an useful exercise, and enable the visitor to watch the progress of the scholars with a small share of trouble and attendance. Let, then, the children be examined from time to time in the tasks they have learnt within a certain period, and let small prizes be distributed on these occasions to those, who can read and spell the best, who can repeat the most and most correctly, and appear to understand best, what they have learnt. These smaller premiums may consist either of a little pocket-money, or of something of a more permanent and ostensible nature, as a prayer-book, with the term Prize-Book stamped on it in gilt letters. Once a year let there be a general examination, when prizes of a greater value may be conceded to those, who have severally made the greatest proficiency in each different kind of work or learning. The proper

per time would probably be immediately before harvest. A regular account ought to be kept of the work performed by each girl every week, as also of every other instance of good or bad behaviour. These accounts should now be carefully inspected. General good conduct should be regarded as a necessary qualification for any prize. Those, who have been most regular at school, or distinguished for any other species of good behaviour, should also receive prizes. And a small gratuity might be extended to every one, whose conduct has been tolerably good throughout the year, or whose faults have been only venial, and timely amended. These several prizes may be expended in any way, the visitor thinks will give most satisfaction to the children, or their parents. That the most valuable prizes are chiefly confined to those, who are the greatest proficients, will operate as an inducement for the children to be continued at school, till they have attained the highest degree of proficency. Some such inducements may be necessary, as otherwise the parents may often be inclined, on the most frivolous pretences, to take them from school, as soon as they can earn any thing at home, before they have acquired a sufficient education. Let it also be proposed to them, that if they will consent to have a portion of their earnings, *e. g.* 1d. a week, kept in reserve, whatever may be the whole amount, it shall be doubled, or a handsome addition shall be made to it, on

their

their leaving school, that the whole may be expended in the purchase of the necessary implements of the employment they have learnt, of an extraordinary supply of cloths, or whatever else may be most desirable to them, at that time; provided only their conduct has been generally good, and they do not leave the school sooner, than meets with the approbation of the vistor.*

I HAVE taken some pains to shew, that the necessary expences of the proposed institutions will be but inconsiderable, which argument will doubtless have weight with those, who already pay largely to the poor's rate, and will be disposed to compute with a degree of minuteness the debtor and creditor sides of the account. But, more generally, we have not so much occasion to lament in this kingdom a deficiency of contributions to any benevolent design, as the want of persons of a sufficient share of zeal and assiduity, and a proper degree of knowledge and discretion, to carry it into effect. This is not a proper occasion to expatiate on the subject, yet it cannot but be lamented, how little the usual education of those, who are designed for the most ostensible situations

* IN what is here advanced, I have not respect solely to the lowest rate of contribution. But if, in addition to the three guineas, as supposed, allotted for gratuities, there should be any other surplus money, to the amount of two guineas more, besides what is destined for books, it will be found commensurate to the prizes and rewards above suggested.

situations in life, their early habits, connections, and employments, however conducive to humanize the mind, and awaken it to benevolent sensations, is yet calculated to excite that peculiar turn of thought and reflection, and to direct the attention into those channels of observation, that are necessary to prepare them for a life of practical and skilful beneficence. For beneficence is a science, which, like every other species of information, is to be acquired only by an appropriate kind of reflection and experience. The proposed institutions, however, it is presumed, require in the patrons no very extensive knowledge of human nature, as exemplified in the lower stations, and a moderate share only of resolution and perseverance, to render them successful. But any benevolent person, that will kindly undertake to patronize and superintend an institution of the proposed form, will find it, I am persuaded, an excellent school for acquiring that particular species of information and experience, that is the most necessary to improve and extend his powers of beneficence.

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POSTSCRIPT.

SUCH schools, as it has been the object of the preceding pages to recommend, if generally established, would, it is hoped, produce a very happy and seasonable reformation in the manners of the lower orders of the community. But to accomplish such a perfect melioration in their character and circumstances, as is sincerely to be desired, it will be necessary, that these institutions should be accompanied with, or followed by, various other objects of improvement. One of the highest importance would be to afford workmen of general good conduct a reasonable expectation, by industry and careful management, of experiencing, at some period of their lives, an essential improvement in their condition, and an actual advancement in the scale of society. In the course of a few years, it is hoped, that many commons and wastes will be brought into a state of cultivation. As some compensation to the neighbouring poor for the advantages they have hitherto been accustomed to derive from such commons, it is much to be wished, that allotments could be made of a number of small properties, sufficiently large

large for the purpose, but in various proportions, many of them having a comfortable cottage annexed to them; which should be offered to industrious workmen of good character at a fair rent for life, or so long, as they can maintain themselves without parochial assistance. In some cases, it may be thought better to encourage labourers to build cottages for themselves, by letting them the land on leases for three lives, subject to a quit-rent, and a fine certain. To prevent these properties from ever being alienated, or swallowed up in large farms, or applied to any other uses, than those, for which they are destined, let them be vested in the hands of certain trustees, who should commonly be the clergyman, churchwardens, and the principal proprietors in the parish. Thus would the labouring classes have an object in view, that would render their characters of value to them, and induce them to save what they could in the days of health and prosperity, that they might have enough to purchase a little stock, or whatever else might be necessary for the cultivation of one of these small portions of land, whenever they should have an opportunity of becoming the tenants. They would then gladly embrace every means of reducing the expences of comfortable subsistence, and would be much better disposed, than the poor commonly are at present, to learn any instances of economy in cookery, fuel, &c. They would also be more desirous that their children should be trained up to in-

dustry,

dustry, and possessed of such qualities, as are found so beneficial to themselves. On such a little farm, as is sufficient for keeping a cow, a few pigs, a little poultry, and raising a large quantity of bulky vegetables by spade cultivation, with the addition of a few bee-hives,* may an elderly person, it is presumed, maintain himself comfortably with the relicts of his family, after he ceases to be able to go regularly to common labour. And thus many an aged workman, in lieu of being regarded as an odious incumbrance on the community, and removed from the domestic quiet and retirement of his own cottage, and the society of his own family, to drag out the remainder of his miserable existence amidst the noise and ribaldry of a parish work-room, would pass the concluding periods of his life on a comfortable and respectable independence, the well-earned recompence of his honest industry. If, then, there were only a sufficient number of such small occupations, it is hoped, that the lower classes would once more regard it, as a matter of shame and reproach, to apply for parochial

* The encouragement of apiaries is an object, that much deserves the public attention. The profit of a few hives would make a very comfortable addition to the means of subsistence of persons in the lower stations of life. Were the practice of keeping bees general amongst cottagers, there would be an annual saving or accession of wealth to the nation to the amount, perhaps, of millions, acquired almost at no expence, nor trouble, and without any perceptible loss to the gardener, or farmer.

chial relief, while many a parish, by making this seasonable use of a large portion of its wastes or commons, would be nearly liberated from a poor's rate. The more usual modes of compensating the poor for the advantages they derived from commons, whether by attaching a small portion of land to each cottage, or making a little distribution of fuel in winter,* constitute no essential improvement in their condition. The land is the property of the owner of the cottage, and not of the poor, and, probably, will be shortly detached from the cottage, and swallowed up in the large farms in the neighbourhood. Each poor person, no longer possessed of the opportunity he heretofore enjoyed of realizing his savings

* It is readily allowed that assisting the poor in the article of fuel is one of the most beneficial modes of relieving them. Perhaps there is no kind of distress, from which they suffer more in many parts of the kingdom than the scarcity of fuel, or none, by which they are more powerfully tempted to dishonest practices. Hence breaking hedges, under the pretence of gathering sticks, is one of the first employments of early youth: and one species of theft imperceptibly leads to others of greater atrocity. Let the poor, then, be liberally relieved in the article of fuel, upon the implied condition indeed, that they incur no suspicion of pursuing dishonest means of relieving themselves; and, it is hoped, their children will not then be so early initiated in the ways of iniquity. The plan, adopted in some parts of Norfolk, merits approbation, of having a portion of the common allotted as the poor's estate, for the purpose of expending the rent in the purchase of fuel for the poor; especially, if the land itself is let to industrious labourers, in the manner recommended in the text.

savings in the purchase of a cow, or a little other stock, to feed on the common, by the aid of which he could maintain himself even in his declining years with some degree of comfort, without parochial assistance, would at length have no other dependence than his daily labours, and no prospect before him, in time of age and infirmity, but a parish workhouse.

WHEN once the labouring classes are inspired with a desire of accumulation, it will then be proper to assist them in improving their savings. There are reasonable objections to the parochial funds recommended originally by Mr. DOWDESWELL and Sir G. SAVILLE, and those more recently suggested in Mr. PITT's bill for the relief of the poor, which would not apply to funds supported by a voluntary subscription. A society of the following nature is therefore proposed. Let a number of gentlemen in any district subscribe, some £10 *per annum*, either of landed or funded property, some £20, £50, or £100, as each thinks fit, as a security to any of the labouring classes, that may be disposed to intrust them with their money. Let the proposed object of the society be to receive the savings of their poorer neighbours by little and little, and allow them a competent interest, till the money is recalled. It would not be difficult to suggest such regulations, as would render the trouble inconsiderable, and secure the subscribers from any loss. There is something in this mode of improving money less selfish, than in the Ton-

times,

fines, and friendly societies, as the family, and not merely the man himself, would enjoy the benefit of the money accumulated: as it is also better calculated to excite a man to diligence and frugality. The same societies might also undertake to sell annuities to the lower classes, for the benefit of their widows; or permit them to secure sums of money to be paid to their sons, or their daughters, at an age, when they may be supposed to be entering on marriage, or about to settle in the world. Schemes for these purposes may easily be drawn out by the aid of Baron MASERES's, Dr. PRICE's, and other Treatises on Annuities. As it is not my intention to swell the present pamphlet by being diffuse on a subject somewhat foreign to its professed object, I shall content myself with subjoining an example, or two. It appears, then, on a reasonable estimation of the probabilities of human existence, that, if the husband's age is 30, and the wife's 24, an annuity of £10 for life, for the benefit of the wife, to commence from the time of her becoming a widow, in case she survive her husband, may be purchased for about £38, if the interest of money is computed at 4 *per cent.* Again, the parent of a child now three years old, by a present payment of about £2 17s. at an interest of 4½ *per cent.* may secure £10 to be paid to the child as soon as it shall have completed its twenty-fifth year, if it should live so long.

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